

## FROM THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

**A Reconnaissance Party in Rebel Country**  
—Two Days with the First Jersey Cavalry—From Camp Curtis to Occoquan—A Desolated City.  
From Our Special Correspondent.

CAMP CURTIS, near Gen. Hunter's camp, Quantico, within two miles of Alexandria, Va.—March 19, 1862.

An order from Headquarters to Col. Wyndham to dispatch a squadron for the purpose of making a reconnaissance to Occoquan and beyond—the force of several scouting parties—and I am invited to accompany it. Of course, I record an eager assent; for it is hours of demolishing rain under canvas, albeit while away in society of the jolliest soldiers, has vehemently incited me for on-the-shoe exercise, and this promises to include a spate of adventure, if not of danger, for we are going into a notoriously Secesh neighborhood, the scene of the exploits of Texas Rangers, "Yankee Killers," and of more than one covertly murderous assault upon our troops—indeed some distance farther than Union men have yet dared to penetrate. Then, too, I trust to get an opportunity of carrying into effect my intention of visiting some of the abandoned Rebel fortifications in his honor, might cause both sleep and ride a twinge of retrospective uneasiness, for they were received from no ambush on the adjacent stream, nor from the locality, which went to which the assailant, after robbing the gallant young Jerseyman of his money, his foot, and making an abortive attempt to despoil him of his long boots, left him to crawl back to safety. In the vicinity, also, less than three weeks ago, a captain, quartermaster, and private of the Old Pennsylvania were killed. However, we ride cautiously and in safety. Our Major presents a garrison from a neighboring house, an adventurous Virginian, whose familiarity with the surrounding country has heretofore been found of good service to the Union cause. Looking in at another dwelling, our chief returns with a smile on his lips and the information that he has conversed with a couple of Secesh women, who have informed him that their brothers are in the Southern army, and that they themselves would be there too, but for their sex. And this introduces anecdotes of the general feeling manifested toward the troops, from which it appears that the clearest, the simplest, the meanest of Virginian women consider herself privileged to insult by word and deed any or every defender of the Government, while "our boys" make a jest of it. Our guide, though he has made a recent reconnaissance of the country, even beyond the Occoquan, on his own account, relates news of the vigilance that has become habitual to him. I remark him ploughing through the thickets and brushwood, "over the hill and far away;" always on the lookout for Texan Rangers or Secesh farmers of amateur murderous proclivities. But we encounter none, and the country seems deserted. Five miles from Pohick lies Occoquan, on the other side of the river of that name, and our cavalcade comes in sight of it, winding along the steep declivity above the river at about 5 in the afternoon.

## BEYOND POKICK RUN.

Through a stony ford, dangerous to horses' feet, across Pohick run, a mile beyond the church, and thence on the Richmond road for the Occoquan. Here we cross the original line of the Rebel pickets, where the past localities of certain of their villages, thrown forward on neighboring hills, and concealed by bushes, are pointed out. Here, too, I should suppose that four Rebel bullets, at the present moment in the body of Capt. J. C. Day, and a similar number in his horse, might cause both sleep and ride a twinge of retrospective uneasiness, for they were received from no ambush on the adjacent stream, nor from the locality, which went to which the assailant, after robbing the gallant young Jerseyman of his money, his foot, and making an abortive attempt to despoil him of his long boots, left him to crawl back to safety. In the vicinity, also, less than three weeks ago, a captain, quartermaster, and private of the Old Pennsylvania were killed. However, we ride cautiously and in safety. Our Major presents a garrison from a neighboring house, an adventurous Virginian, whose familiarity with the surrounding country has heretofore been found of good service to the Union cause. Looking in at another dwelling, our chief returns with a smile on his lips and the information that he has conversed with a couple of Secesh women, who have informed him that their brothers are in the Southern army, and that they themselves would be there too, but for their sex. And this introduces anecdotes of the general feeling manifested toward the troops, from which it appears that the clearest, the simplest, the meanest of Virginian women consider herself privileged to insult by word and deed any or every defender of the Government, while "our boys" make a jest of it. Our guide, though he has made a recent reconnaissance of the country, even beyond the Occoquan, on his own account, relates news of the vigilance that has become habitual to him. I remark him ploughing through the thickets and brushwood, "over the hill and far away;" always on the lookout for Texan Rangers or Secesh farmers of amateur murderous proclivities. But we encounter none, and the country seems deserted. Five miles from Pohick lies Occoquan, on the other side of the river of that name, and our cavalcade comes in sight of it, winding along the steep declivity above the river at about 5 in the afternoon.

## OCOQUAN.

Ocoquan may have been "quite a place" before Secession ruined it—sending fish, lumber, grain and fruit produce by water-carriage to Alexandria, for further transportation. At present it looks as deserted as may be, only a small knot of idlers having collected on the opposite bank to gaze at the first appearance of Yankee troops in that vicinity. Our Major leads his troopers in the direction of a Rebels fort to the left, perhaps three-quarters of a mile off, which the guide has spoken of as abandoned by the enemy; hence one of two dingy flat-bottomed boats and announces his intention of paying the city and fort a visit—the river is altogether too deep and rapid to admit of the cavalry fording it. So be, with Capt. Janeway, are rowed across. The Sunbeam and I follow. And we question the idlers assembled at the riverside end of a dingy street at the top of the sloping bank, awaiting our arrival. They are not prepossessing-looking persons by any means—shabby, mouching, and exhibiting in perfection that grimness of countenance common to the "white trash" of Secession—which a Northerner can hardly behold without a yearning desire to put the objects of contemplation under a pump. They peer at us curiously, saying but little. There were a thousand soldiers and more in and around Ocoquan yesterday week, who have gone away now. We enter a store kept by a rigid woman who says that she belongs to Brooklyn, New-York, and is glad to see us, purchase a few cigars—nearly all that she has to sell—and then signal across the river for half a dozen troopers with carbines, who, arriving in time, go clanking about the town after us on a tour of inspection. Up the stream we tramp, over hucky little foot-path bridges, by which the swollen river runs and rashes, past a deserted mill, back again through muddy by-lanes carefully scrutinizing everything on our way. The Major desires certain barrels piled in a loft, suspects ammunition, examines, and gives the word to proceed. Across a field or two in the sheltered condition, through thickets, stream, and over hill-side to the abandoned fort, named after the village. Its site is well chosen, placed on the summit of a hill; it commands the surrounding country and river. It consists of an earthen parapet faced with logs, pierced by four embrasures, a ditch in front. A but and certain shanties inside have afforded shelter for the garrison. Guns, men and ammunition are all gone. I make a hasty sketch and plan at the Major's request, and we then return to the village. Here we are hospitably entertained by a poor woman, of Union sympathies, who sets before us bread and milk—all she has—and speaks dolorously and dejectedly of the doings of the Rebels. Her son has been compelled to flee to Washington; her fishing boats are destroyed; she and her family have scarcely anything to live on, and she hopes the Rebels will never come there again. We eat, drink, nod thanks and payment and tramp onward. Five minutes are then spent in the purchase of Confederate shingles, as curiosities, from the townsfolk, who are ludicrously eager to be rid of them. I acquire two twenty cent Virginia bank notes, and an equal number of half the denomination, one Virginian, the other emanating from the lordly State of South Carolina, the three being duly executed, the latter about three inches square. One of the sellers obliges me with a list of current prices of the vicinity. Here they are: Coffee, from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per lb.; Salt, \$16 per bushel; Bacon, \$2.50 per lb.; Whisky, \$1.50 per gallon; Meats, \$12.50 per quarter barrel; Sugar, from \$3.00 per lb.; a box of matches, 10c.; Calico, 25c. a yard. I find that Secession is a costly luxury which this generation will hardly care about paying the price of a second time. We leave behind us probably more silver currency than the inhabitants of Occoquan have seen during the past six months, and then cross the river and to horses again. It is a dark and dreary ride that brings us back to Pohick Run, and thence, under the direction of our guide, through an abominably thickly wooded swamp to Chicksawhatchie, so named from the ex-residence of an old Virginian family—Rebel, of course. Here we halt for the night. The men find ample quarters in deserted tenements, barns and outhouses, build fires, and make themselves picturesquely comfortable. The officers obtain a hearty meal of bacon, eggs and hash, at the house of a Mr. Baylis, from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, whose husband is now a prisoner in Richmond, Virginia, and I share with the Major the only vacant bed in his possession.

## BACK TO CAMP.

I must confide the next day's dings, for my washed interior; it has been bisected in repeatedly by both parties, as the rough planks and brambles covering its broken floor—was as extempore holding—mud teeter. Seen under this dilapidated heap, on Sunday, too, thought is mournfully suggestive of the results of civil war, and experienced a wholesome and reassuring sense of the wickedness of those whose insane devotion to the great American jugger-nut of slavery brought it about. Two or three of iron-faced country boys, as the major, sergeant, and myself, survey the interior. They know or will tell us nothing. There's been no "Secess" about there—at least, they "ain't seen none for a week or more." We mount again, and resume our journey.

## THE TENACITY OF THE PRESS.

## Report of the Committee.

We gave, in yesterday's edition, a brief synopsis of the report of the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, on the subject of telegraphic and newspaper supervision and restriction by the Government. The following is a complete copy of the report as presented to the House:

REPORT OF JAMES F. WILSON, OF IOWA FROM THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.

The Committee on the Judiciary instructed by resolution of the House to "inquire if a telegraphic censorship of the Press, between established in this city, by whom authority, by whom controlled, and what are the powers given to him by such authority."

"Question—By Mr. F. P. Blair—What was your conception before the meeting of Congress, as to the propriety of such a censorship?"

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